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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

SELECTMEN

AND

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

TO THE INHABITANTS OF THE

TOWN OF MONTAGUE.

1868-9.

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GREENFIELD:


FRANKLIN AND JOB PRINTING OFFICE,

CORNER'S BLOCK, MAIN STREET.

1869.

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TREASURER'S ACCOUNT.

— ♦ —

J. H. Roor, Treasurer in account with the Town of Montague.

Dr.

Cash on hand, February 15, 1868,	\$21 30
“ received for rent of Lecture Room,	30 00
“ “ for use of Town Hall,	18 50
“ “ for Tolls at Falls Ferry,	30 00
“ “ for amount of Tax Bill,	7,233 50
“ “ from State for State Aid,	951 40
“ “ from State School Fund,	145 46
“ “ from State Coporation Tax,	94 70
“ “ from Liquor Agency,	172 35
“ “ from Town of Deerfield, for Rice's Ferry for 1867,	42 70
	—————\$8,739 91

Cr.

By paying State Tax,	\$1,400 00
By paying County Tax,	930 00
By paying State Aid, from March 1, 1868, to March 1, 1869,	736 00
By paying Selectmen's Orders,	5,442 91
Cash on hand, February 18, 1869,	231 00
	—————\$8,739 91

SELECTMEN'S ACCOUNT.

We have given orders on the Treasury for the following expenses:

1st. Schooling,	\$2,163 89
2d. Extra Highway work,	418 07
3d. Services of Town Officers,	457 50
4th. Interest on Town Debts,	552 71
5th. Town Debts,	1,200 00
6th. Miscellaneous expenses,	150 74
7th. Support of Poor,	500 00
	————\$5,442 91

APPROPRIATIONS FOR SCHOOLING.

Received from Town Tax,	\$2,000 00
“ from State School Fund,	145 46
“ from Treasurer, balance due for 1867,	19 70
	————\$2,165 16
Paid School Committee,	\$2,163 89
Balance due the District,	1 27
	————\$2,165 16

EXTRA HIGHWAY WORK.

Noah Grover,	\$2 55
Peter Spaulding,	17 84
John P. Pierce,	3 00
	———— \$23 29

	\$23 39
Horace Ripley,	2 10
Philander Boutwell,	10 40
J. R. Waters,	1 00
R. N. Oakman,	2 00
Benjamin Fay,	121 34
John Hannigan,	29 00
Warren Bardwell,	48 00
Philip Hannigan,	19 00
Henry Hudson,	3 00
A. W. Grout,	19 50
Joseph Ripley,	1 50
David Pratt,	6 00
Lucius Dresser,	12 00
A. H. Sawin,	14 50
Town Farm,	16 00
B. F. Savage,	2 00
F. E. Dickinson,	2 40
Sanford Goddard,	15 00
Zenas Clapp,	55 43
Charles & H. C. Lawrence,	11 26
H. H. Shepard,	3 25
	—\$418 07

SERVICES OF TOWN OFFICERS.

J. H. Root, Treasurer,	\$35 00
J. H. Root, Town Clerk,	30 00
R. N. Oakman, Selectman and Overseer of Poor,	50 00
R. N. Oakman, Assessor,	30 00
R. N. Oakman, School Committee,	20 00
R. N. Oakman, Constable and Collector,	104 50
J. H. Root, Selectman and Overseer of Poor,	50 00
J. H. Root, Assessor,	30 00
W. A. Bancroft, Selectman & Overseer of Poor,	25 00
W. A. Bancroft, Assessor,	25 00
	—\$399 50

		\$399 50
E. Norton, School Committee,	20 00	
E. A. Deane, " "	20 00	
Richard Clapp, Road "	6 00	
Thaxter Shaw, " "	6 00	
S. C. Wells, " " and Constable,	6 00	
	————	\$457 50

INTEREST ON TOWN DEBTS.

Mrs. Adaline Mathews,	\$3 50	
J. H. Root,	29 20	
Mrs. E. V. Ward,	94 72	
R. N. Oakman,	39 00	
Lucretia G. Bardwell,	14 60	
Thaxter Shaw,	131 40	
E. L. Delano,	116 88	
Peter Spaulding,	12 00	
Elijah Bardwell,	87 60	
H. B. Gunn,	7 50	
Temporary interest,	16 31	
	————	\$552 71

TOWN DEBT.

Thaxter Shaw,	\$1,200 00
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MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES.

State Reform School, for Wm. Britt,	22 31	
Driving Hearse and tolling bell,	30 00	
Rice's Ferry,	32 87	
Printing,	28 00	
J. P. Gould, damage,	1 00	
School Books,	3 41	
Postage, Express and Stationery,	22 75	
Blank Books and Blanks,	6 15	
Paint for Hearse House,	4 25	
	————	\$150 74

SUPPORT OF POOR.

Paid for the Town Farm, by vote of Town,	\$500 00
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INDEBTEDNESS OF THE TOWN.

Notes to Peter Spaulding,	\$200 00
“ to Apollos Burnham,	200 00
“ to E. L. Delano,	1,575 00
“ to R. N. Oakman,	500 00
“ to Mrs. E. V. Ward,	1,325 00
“ to Elijah Bardwell,	1,200 00
“ to J. H. Root,	400 00
“ to Thaxter Shaw,	600 00
“ to Mrs. L. G. Bardwell,	200 00
“ to H. B. Gunn,	100 00
	<hr/> \$6,300 00

RESOURCES.

Due from State for State Aid,	\$904 00
Due from Liquor Agency,	12 22
Cash in Treasury,	231 00
	<hr/> \$1,147 22
Amount of Town Debt,	\$5,152 78
Our debts are for Town House,	925 00
Bounty,	1,400 00
Town Farm,	2,375 00
State Aid,	1,600 00
	<hr/> \$6,300 00

Estimated necessary Appropriations for 1869 :

Schooling,	\$2,000 00
Town Debts,	1,000 00
Interest,	450 00
Contingencies,	550 00
Support of Poor,	500 00
Extra Highway Work,	200 00
	<hr/> \$4,700 00

TOWN FARM.**Cash Account.**

	Dr.
Cash on hand, February 15, 1868,	\$72 17
Cash received from State, for support of N. Hartson, for 1867,	120 00
	<hr/> \$192 17

		\$192 17
Cash borrowed of A. Burnham,	100 00	
“ received for keeping horse,	2 25	
“ “ for Straw,	3 04	
“ “ for Beef,	134 01	
“ “ for Cow,	60 00	
“ “ for work on road,	16 00	
“ “ for Butter and Eggs,	111 00	
“ “ for Pasturing,	33 00	
“ “ for Beans,	4 50	
“ “ for Team work,	3 00	
“ “ for Liquor License and tax on sales,	55 98	
“ “ for Hartson’s bill,	140 13	
“ “ from Town Treasury,	500 00	
	<hr/>	\$1,355 08

TOWN FARM.**Cr.**

Paid D. Smith, balance of salary,	\$25 00	
Paid sundry bills to April 1, 1868,	66 47	
Paid for Grain and Meal,	56 92	
“ Groceries and Provisions,	97 57	
“ Wheat and Grass Seeds,	15 03	
“ Clothing,	48 25	
“ Labor on Farm,	54 25	
“ Poor out of Almshouse,	299 14	
“ Medicine and Attendance,	65 68	
“ Blacksmith’s bill,	11 67	
“ Funeral Expenses,	35 00	
“ Repairs,	13 31	
“ Farming Tools,	23 25	
“ House Furniture,	15 44	
“ Meat,	5 55	
“ Sundries,	7 15	
“ Live Stock,	246 00	
	<hr/>	\$1,085 68

	\$1,085 68
Paid for Plaster,	12 00
Paid Peter Williams, salary to March 1, '69,	229 00
Cash on hand, February 18, 1869,	28 40
	<hr/> \$1,355 08

INVENTORY

Of the Town Farm Property, February 18, 1869.

Real Estate,	\$4,200 00
Live Stock—1 Horse,	100 00
2 Oxen,	240 00
6 Cows,	325 00
2 Yearlings,	25 00
6 Swine,	125 00
25 Hens,	10 00
	<hr/> \$825 00

Produce and Provisions:—

Hay,	100 00
Straw,	10 00
10 bushels Rye,	15 00
5 “ Oats,	4 00
3 “ Beans,	5 00
50 “ Potatoes,	37 00
140 “ Corn,	140 00
250 pounds Pork,	60 00
40 “ Lard,	10 00
1 barrel Vinegar,	10 00
	<hr/> \$391 00

House Furniture,	275 00
Farming Tools,	385 00
Cash on hand,	28 40
	<hr/> \$688 40

Total Inventory,	\$6,104 40
Borrowed in 1866,	200 00
Borrowed in 1868,	100 00
	<hr/> 300 00

Net Inventory, \$5,804 40

SUPPORT OF POOR.

Inventory of 1868,	\$5,889 17	
Inventory of 1869,	5,804 40	
	<hr/>	
Deficiency,		\$84 77
Paid from Town Treasury, for support of poor,	500 00	
Paid from Town Treasury, Int. on Farm debt,	312 60	
Interest on \$850 received from first Farm,	51 00	
Taxes on Farm property,	35 00	
	<hr/>	
Whole cost of supporting poor,		\$983 37
Paid for poor out of Almshouse,		299 14
		<hr/>
Cost of supporting poor at Almshouse,		\$684 23

We have furnished 312 weeks' board, which will make the weekly cost of boarding, clothing, nursing and doctoring the inmates of the Almshouse, \$2 19.

Of the large amount paid for Poor out of the Almshouse, \$76 75 was paid for the Loveland family at Greenfield, \$65 for E. Clapp, and \$122 for Mrs. Caleb Thayer. These have seemed to us exceptions to our rule to support none of our Poor out of our Almshouse, and while we have saved money in these particular cases, we are establishing a bad precedent. It is difficult to make our present farm return a favorable account. We can only do this by bringing to it all our paupers for support.

R. N. OAKMAN,	} Selectmen of Montague.
J. H. ROOT,	
W. A. BANCROFT,	

MONTAGUE

SCHOOL COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

Once more the year's revolving, it becomes our duty to report to the parents and citizens of Montague of the condition and promise of their public schools. For nineteen years the Chairman of your Committee has assisted in the superintendence of your schools to the best of his time and ability. He is aware that, especially in later years, the cares of his own business and the claims of other engagements have encroached upon the time that should be devoted to so important a trust. Always interested in the school-room, he has, in all these years, enjoyed many happy hours, and without abating one jot or tittle of interest in the welfare of the children and youth of Montague, and hoping and expecting to meet them often, yet he feels obliged for himself and for the schools as well, that he be released from further official obligation.

You have now for two years tried the experiment of allowing the Superintending Committee to hire your teachers. It was proposed at the commencement to test the change for three years and then act on that experience, but inasmuch as at this annual meeting the question of abolishing the school districts will necessarily come up for discussion and action, it may be as well that the whole matter come in together, and we have therefore asked the Selectmen to insert an article in their warrant, as was the custom formerly, "to see if the town will authorize Prudential Committees to hire teachers." You have had but two years' trial, but we submit whether you have not found the change beneficial to the schools as a whole.

Acting in town meeting assembled you should not vote that which will specially favor any one school or class of schools, but that which will be most advantageous to each and every one of the four hundred school children in town. The present plan has not worked without friction, as new machinery seldom will. Many of the Prudential Committees have thought their powers and prerogatives abridged, and as they were denied the privilege of *inviting* some friend or relation to teach their children (they never had the right to *hire* absolutely) they have refused to perform the plain and important duties of their office, such as providing board, fuel, repairs, &c. This has put a heavy extra burden upon the shoulders of the General Committee, where it did not belong, which they have carried as well as they could and without complaint, being anxious to fairly test the change.

We should say that in a few of the districts the Prudential Committees have done all they could to lighten our labors. We claim the following advantages in favor of having the General Committee hire the teachers. Your Committee are able to keep a class of teachers in their employ who have proved themselves successful. The great fault of our former practice was that we so often changed our teachers. A good teacher can accomplish much more for a school the second term than the first, and may be continued in a school for successive terms with advantage. Much of the practice by which favorite teachers were *snatched* from one school to another, according to the energy and shrewdness of District Committees, is avoided. A class of teachers are employed by the Superintending Committee equal to the whole number of teachers required. These are distributed among the several schools as in their judgment will best serve the cause for which they labor. While all should be qualified fully up to the requirement of the law, still the City school must have a different teacher from Miller's River, that is, one more skilled and experienced in teaching. There is the same disparity between the Centre and Lafayette Districts. Your Committee can place the young teacher in the smaller school, and hold out to her, if she exhibits tact, the promise of promotion, which is a better promise of reward for her patient and faithful labors than the prospect of going into the Prudential crowd and bidding for her chance.

Fellow citizens, the whole matter is with you. It is a matter in

which you are greatly interested. It is a matter in which your children are greatly interested. Act wisely and for the common good.

One word about the School District system. We are required by statute to vote to-day on the question of abolishing our School Districts. The Board of Education seem determined to break down this once so much boasted system of Massachusetts. The State School Fund has been the lever with which for several years they have been tugging at the monster evil. At last, they have bearded the lion in his den, and have proposed to the present Legislature to abolish the system altogether. There is no question but that the General System is the better for cities, large villages and populous towns. In a town like ours, with so many out-laying districts, sparsely populated, the question will bear discussion. We have not time to enter upon it here. By reason of our long absence from home we are pressed for time to make even this brief report in season for our accustomed distribution. But let the whole matter be fully and fairly discussed at our annual meeting. Let us decide for ourselves what course will best promote the educational interest of our children.

We have been required to provide six months schooling in each district in order to draw our full share of the school fund. We are hereafter required to abolish our districts in order to receive that bounty. The question to-day is, which is the best for us, the General or District System. If we decide for the District then the question is whether that preference exceeds the loss we incur in the school fund. If we are to provide six months schooling in each district it will not be practicable to divide our school money as heretofore, on the scholar, as some small districts will receive a sum entirely inadequate to a compliance with the requirement, while others will have a surplus.

We have always held that one scholar in town is entitled to just as much of the public school as another. That there is no good reason why you should take funds from the common treasury to educate one child eight months in the year and another only three or four. That if our children have any claim on the public funds they have an equal claim. That by no accident of condition or location is a partiality justifiable. Now then, admitting these propositions, how shall we best attain the highest educational advantage of *all* our children?

If by abolishing our School Districts, let it be done without hesitation or counting the cost. If by restoring to Prudential Committees their former practice of hiring teachers, let it be done without delay or hindrance.

The hope and glory of New England is in her public schools. It becomes us not to be satisfied with what has been, but to press forward to the mark for the prize of our high calling.

Whatever of difference there may be in relation to our other town affairs, let us be of one mind and one heart in all that pertains to our schools. We think they have been tolerably successful the past year, yet capable of great improvement.

Your Committee will need your assistance, whatever line of action you may mark out. Do not think you can shift upon them your duties and responsibilities. But rather let co-operation be our watchword. Let parents and guardians and committees of every name, unitedly and wisely spare no effort to promote the cause of education in our midst.

R. N. OAKMAN,
EDWARD NORTON,
E. A. DEANE,
Superintending School Committee.



